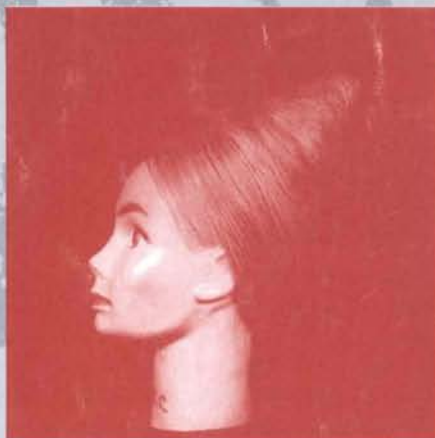
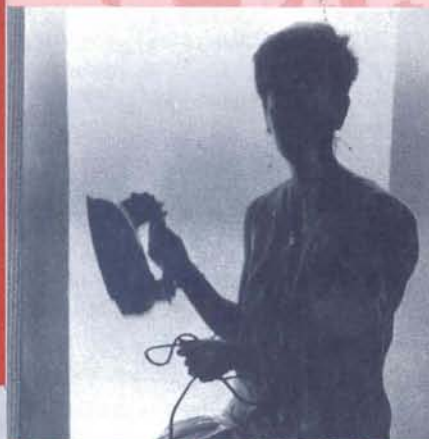


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# changes



works by  
**marion marrison**



and **janina green**

An exhibition tracing the shift in photographic practice of two Australian photographers  
from 'wet' darkroom methods to the 'new technologies' print processes.



## break

I did very little work from 1980 to 1990. I was no longer compelled to take photographs. Like many others, I found the documentary aspect of photography inadequate. I was increasingly dissatisfied with the nature of my work, although I continue to find the *Bonnet Hill Bush Series* and some of the *Practical Dreams* very satisfying to contemplate. The intellectual process of doing that work was enormously rewarding and thus an end in itself. These days the end is the finished product and I find the process merely an unsatisfactory means as it does not have the same type of engagement.

## shift

The early work was concerned with visual realities, visual perception and aesthetics. It was important that oddities such as the 'Horse' (1979) and the 'Acorn Fairy Landscape' (1979) really existed. Much of the *Bonnet Hill Bush Series* was not observable; it required the transience of light and the phenomenon of black and white film. In both series I sought to extend my mind and observation, not the materials. Although much has changed, I continue to be fascinated with unlikely conjunctions that do exist or may have done so and with inversions of truth. I continued to do odd pieces and to collect pictures, postcards and articles. My reading choices seemed whimsical and were mostly on the military and science. I had to find ways of making work differently and to do so with a balance of intuition and consciousness given that I seemed headed towards more calculated work. More importantly, I had to discover what I really wanted to say. Although I didn't know it at the time, the 'Rooster' (1990) was the first of the new work and shortly after that everything dovetailed, the means materialised and I had 'Cats Always Land' (1990-92) the first of the *Dumb*.

## changes

Both Marion Marrison and Janina Green are important Australian photographers with well established careers. Some of the work by Marion Marrison included in this exhibition dates from the early 1970s. This was the era when photography finally gained something like universal acceptance as a legitimate fine art form, although almost from photography's inception there had been practitioners whose main criteria were aesthetic. Certainly throughout this century there were, particularly in Europe and the USA, individuals such as Paul Strand, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Ansel Adams working as fine art photographers. In Europe and America photography was also central to much Surrealist practice.

There were many reasons for the recognition of photography, initially in the USA, in the 1970s. With the concurrent rise of feminism it is not surprising that photography became, and remains, a medium with a significantly large number of female adherents. Following the international lead, photography was sanctioned as a valid, discrete art form in this country and began to be collected and exhibited in art galleries and taught in Schools of Art.

The practice of both Marrison and Green spans and encapsulates the history, thus far, of fine art photography in that their earliest work is mainstream, 'straight', black and white photography in the tradition of the 'fine print'. Then, over time, both artists have moved towards an increased interest in, and commitment to, digital and computer-generated imagery, along with other 'high-tech' or contemporary means of manipulating, enhancing or intervening in the image.

Of course, there are today photographic artists such as Robyn Stacey who have forsaken the darkroom altogether and declare it obsolete. There are new Schools of Art where Photomedia departments do not include darkrooms. There are designers and graphic artists everywhere whose practice revolves around the computer and for whom the darkroom is unknown territory. Whilst it is, admittedly, an interest in this scenario that was a motivating factor in the initial development of this survey exhibition, this is not to suggest that either Marrison or Green has entirely or definitively abandoned the traditional 'wet' printing method.

Both artists address a number of the same themes and subjects — landscape, aspects of consumerism and the roles and representation of women. Whilst these topics are similar, the resulting bodies of work are absolutely individual and original. Even taking into account the timespan represented in these surveys of their work — ten years for Janina Green and about twenty in Marion Marrison's case — there is a remarkable range of subject matter in their works, and a variety of visual styles. Yet the viewer will detect the underlying links and on-going concerns that draw the bodies of work together.

It is the shift in the photographic practice of these two important artists, from the traditional 'wet' darkroom method to an involvement with the applications of 'new technologies', that informs this exhibition.

Marion Marrison was the first graduate to major in photography at the Tasmanian School of Art (in 1973) and she then taught in the Photography Department there until 1983, when she moved to Sydney. As already noted, her engagement with the medium goes back to the beginnings of fine art photography in this country.

Janina Green majored in printmaking which she feels is a medium with much in common with photography. She currently lives in Melbourne and teaches fine art photography at tertiary level. She developed her interest in photography when, after a career as an art teacher, she was an arts

My first exhibition was inspired by Richard Prince's rephotographed images of Marlboro men and bikie girls. I had just read Victor Burgin's *Thinking Photography* and was smitten by the excitement of post-modern feminism, especially round ideas of originality, authorship and female spectatorship. And having studied printmaking, photography seemed a natural democratic way of making images from the world around me.



'Washing Basket', from the series *Still Life* 1987-88, 20" x 25"

The camera makes the isolated struggle of reproducing reality instant, painless and wondrous, and facilitates much time for conceptual reflection. I love the camera's access to naturalistic detail and its ability to describe everyday minutiae. It's a machine for recording and recreating a world view which is unique to each user.

As a tool you hope the camera can intercede for you — transform the humdrum to something super real, surreal, something transporting. There is always the vain but tempting hope that the fleeting, the chance, the accidental, when captured by this sleek tool, will transform something ordinary into something special. The lure of the better lens, more facile



*Animals*. The 'Rooster' links all the new work, having been shown in a 5' x 4' form with the *Animals* in 1992 and in its current form (16" x 20") with the *Duennas* in 1994.



Horse, Chartres 1979 9.75" x 11.75"  
from the series *Practical Dreams*

## jibe

The work since 1990 is concerned with perceptions of truth and reality.

I put together image and text to create discordant overtones as a way of pointing out misperceptions and erroneous values which are often ludicrous and downright dangerous. Animals are a key choice as they are integral to our beliefs, rituals and economic system. To speak of the animal invariably, and somewhat regrettably, is to speak of the human.

Although I had expected to move away from photography, it is still relevant because the work is about real objects and beliefs. The process remains that of discovering objects and documenting them.

Marion Marrison

January 1996

journalist writing mainly for *The Melbourne Times*. Having reviewed many photographic shows, she turned to photography herself and is largely self-taught. Her work in *Changes* dates from the era when computer / digital imaging began to be added to photography's repertoire of techniques — at much the same time as Postmodernism gave rise to an eclectic re-evaluation and re-interpretation of media, styles and technical methods in all the visual arts.

Marrison's first, long-term project, the *Bonnet Hill Bush Series* is linked to the Australian landscape tradition by its inherently dramatic aesthetic and will be familiar to some visitors to this exhibition. *Bonnet Hill* focused on a small tract of once unsullied bushland some twenty kilometres from Hobart. Photographed during the beginnings of the local wilderness movement which campaigned in Tasmania to halt the 'development' at Lake Pedder and on the Franklin River in the South-West, the *Bonnet Hill* series is one person's intimate involvement with the variety and potential of a small piece of bushland and is 'in the main ... an interpretation of particular forms and feelings.'

'Despite my fondness for wilderness', Marrison says, 'I did object to its portrayal as heroic, grandiose and idealistic.'<sup>2</sup> If Marrison was attracted to the apparently unconstrained, erratic nature of the bush, the images she produced, after countless hours of observing, photographing and waiting for desired light conditions, are sophisticated, serene and subtle. The *Bonnet Hill* photographs are exceedingly accomplished images, '... seemingly straightforward and documentary, [yet] manipulated in the sense of distortions of scale, space and viewpoint and the fiction of black and white,'<sup>3</sup> as Marrison explains. She notes that '... photography represent[s] only the observer's view of reality and that realities are, of course, both multiple and shifting.'<sup>4</sup>

Marrison's ensuing body of work, *Green Bans* (1974-75) is perhaps less well known, but of considerable political significance. The Green Bans movement in New South Wales was an initiative of the Builders Labourers Federation to prevent continued demolition of areas of historic Sydney, including workers' homes, that were earmarked to become high-rises and freeways. In 1974 Marrison was commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation to document the remaining ban sites and produced a record of inner-city Sydney areas such as Woolloomooloo, Glebe, the Rocks and the Botanical Gardens. Today, happily, the intrinsic aesthetic, historical and cultural importance of these sites is widely acknowledged. *Green Bans* also notably includes a remarkable series of portraits of some of the tenants of these inner-city areas, the only such works in Marrison's *oeuvre*.

Marrison's fascination with the real, the actual, versus the seeming and the illusory, informs her work in a variety of ways. There is the apparent disorder of the land at Bonnet Hill revealed — or manipulated to reveal — the bush's essential structure and the complex compositional order and connection of the objects she photographs. Then there is the sturdy reality and integrity of the Green Ban sites challenging the ill-considered and delusive visions of developers.

*Practical Dreams* (1979-80) continues this fascination but is very different in style and content. Marrison now employs colour and many of the images are taken in Britain and Europe. The earlier contemplative calm of the landscapes and the timelessness of the *Green Bans* locations are replaced by an unsettling, restive quality as Marrison records the contrived and intricate world of contemporary, urban shop windows and their fantastic contents. She finds strange and unintended juxtapositions both within these tableaux and in the inclusion of elements fortuitously encountered on the adjacent city pavements.

Gary Catalano speaks of the 'absorbing images in *Practical Dreams*, [a series that is] a cool, bemused and only rarely caustic poetic essay on the obscure psychology of everyday economic life.'<sup>5</sup> The photographs record this 'cliché-ridden fantasy world'<sup>6</sup> in an ironic and highly original and masterful way. This work with its 'urban imagery and commitment to colour heralded a new

craftsmanship, computer technology, motivates the shift from one method to an improved one, an improvement that may be more illusory than real.

There is the hope that technological devices can offset the distractions of the labours of teaching and the drain of domesticity.

I use my 5 x 4 Linhoff Technika as a contemplative reframing device and no matter how much I plan and schematise my subject, my selections remain psychological, inescapably tied to the subconscious. The images are highly sexualized, whether they are teacups or stains on carpet, as the home is the site for all that is sexual and terrifying.

Janina Green

January 1996



'The House that Pop built', 1993, 40" x 30"  
from the series *Vacuum*



Born Hobart, (Marion Hardman)

### studies

- 1973 Diploma of Art (Design), Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart
- 1987 Graduate Diploma in Communications, University of Technology, Sydney
- 1991 Graduate Diploma of Education, University of Technology, Sydney
- 1992 - 96 MFA (Research) Candidate, College of Fine Arts, Sydney



'Rooster', 1990 16" x 20" from the series *Dozing Duennas*

### solo exhibitions

- 1975 *Green Bans*, Arts Council of New South Wales, Sydney
- 1978 *Photographs from Earth*, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, Melbourne; Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart
- Installation at Bonnet Hill*, Bonnet Hill, Hobart
- 1980 *Mirrors and Beads*, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney

direction for Marion Marrison',<sup>7</sup> the opportunity to explore the absurdities of the man-made world and 'to exercise a penchant for satire and humour'.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1981 and 1990, Marion Marrison ceased serious involvement with photography, having become more and more disillusioned with the medium and with two aspects in particular. First was the 'flavour of the month' fashion for staged, manipulated work to the exclusion of the documentary and, secondly, her '... frustration that such still and contemplative work as *Bonnet Hill* might be fine in perpetuity ... but was not sufficiently active in a climate where the very existence of what [she] held dear was continually threatened'.<sup>9</sup> Marrison decided to take time off and not undertake formal production until she had thought through her attitude to photography and formulated a different strategy. For an artist with no interest 'in montage that is obviously contrived',<sup>10</sup> the 'bloodless, entropic, too fatuously faked direction which the medium seemed to be taking'<sup>11</sup> inevitably signalled the need to stand back and reconsider her practice.

At first glance Marrison's work since 1990 seems fundamentally different from her earlier output. Yet there are similarities to be found. Her concern for nature and the environment as shown in *Bonnet Hill* and *Green Bans* is mirrored and extended by *Dumb Animals* with its exposé of mankind's — and specifically military science's — exploitation of the animal world. A similar theme informs the work-in-progress featuring koalas and can be traced in individual works in the series *Dozing Duennas* (e.g. 'Mummy').

Just as *Practical Dreams* highlights the bizarre, chance juxtapositions to be found in and around the fantasy world of shop window displays, *Dumb Animals* and *Dozing Duennas* utilise the juxtaposition of horrendous and unlikely — but true — anecdotes with familiar and apparently anodyne illustrations which thereby take on a new and very disquieting resonance. 'Portrait of the Artist as a Young Doll', from *Dozing Duennas* actually melds two images in the computer, (the idealized 'Barbie' doll and Marrison's own portrait) to produce a sharp comment on feminine stereotypes that Catriona Moore describes as '... creepiness [that] actually improves on Barbie's looks'.<sup>12</sup>

It is interesting that, whilst Marrison's reinvestment in photography came about through an increasing involvement with digital technology, she downplays her use of the computer and says that — with odd exceptions — she 'has yet to see it used to achieve something different'.<sup>13</sup> 'Portrait of the Artist' she describes as 'a simple collage which could have been done by cutting, pasting and rephotographing, [which] would have been cheaper and probably not have taken any longer'.<sup>14</sup> So Marion is not in thrall to the new technology, but she does acknowledge that the computer permits her to marry image and text seamlessly and to experiment with dimensions, colours and positionings of elements within the image. She observes:

The pre-1990 work was perceptual, aesthetically oriented and unconcerned with audience. Since 1990 it is largely conceptual, aesthetics takes a back seat to content and the audience is of prime importance. However, it would be wrong to say I do the work just for others; I do it for myself in both instances.<sup>15</sup>

Working with the computer on *Dumb Animals* she combines and manipulates found images and her own photographs with text, achieving the irresistible smoothness of advertising, but unlike the glossy advertisement, her text deconstructs — dislocates and questions — or is questioned by that image. Here is another aspect of Marrison's investigation of reality and illusion, as she raises questions about truth and propaganda and about the photograph as index of reality, as irrefutable evidence.

The content of some of *Dumb Animals* echoes such *Practical Dreams* pieces as 'Horse', 'Fox' and 'Gun', and these three share a somewhat menacing quality with some of the *Duennas* and with the new 'koala' work. It is interesting to chart the similarities and many apparent contrasts in Marrison's *oeuvre* over the years, noting the different approaches taken to recurrent themes and motifs.

Born Essen, Germany

### studies

- 1962-63 Secondary Teaching Certificate (Art and Craft), Victoria College, Prahran
- 1965 Fellowship Diploma of Art (Printmaking), Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne
- 1971-73 Studied Fine Arts, Melbourne University

### solo exhibitions

- 1986 *Rephotography -- Anxiety and Reproduction*, Artists' Space, Melbourne
- 1987 *Reproduction*, The Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney
- 1988 *Still Life Photographs*, Artists' Space, Melbourne
- 1989 *Figureworks*, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney
- New Work, Artists' Space, Melbourne
- 1991 *Manual Labour*, Artists' Space, Melbourne
- 1993 *Vacuum*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne
- 1994 *Vacuum*, Araluen Centre, Alice Springs; Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth; Gippsland Regional Art Gallery, Morwell
- Understudy*, Fringe Festival, Adelaide
- 1995 *Vacuum*, Horsham City Art Gallery, Horsham



- 1981 *Measurements at Bonnet Hill*, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1982 *Practical Dreams*, Macquarie Galleries, Sydney
- 1992 *Dumb Animals*, First Draft (West), Sydney
- 1994 *Dozing Duennas*, Stills Gallery, Sydney
- 1995 *Read & Wrapped, Viewed & Banned, Photographs 1974-1995*, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide

**selected group exhibitions**  
(since 1985)

- 1985 *New Landscapes*, Tasmanian School of Art Gallery, Hobart  
*Developed Image*, Adelaide
- 1986 *The Australian Landscape Photographed*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Albury Regional Centre, Albury; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1988 *The Views Trade*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
- 1993 *Contemporary Australian Photography*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart  
*Flowers, Herbs, Human Breath and Animal Sweat*, The Long Gallery, University of Wollongong, Wollongong
- 1994 *Weird Science?*, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide
- 1995 *Fact and Fictions: Animal Visions of the 21st Century*, The Light Factory, Charlotte, North Carolina  
*Weird Science?*, Australia Centre, Manila  
*Technothelylogia*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne

The work of Janina Green, in contrast, focuses more closely on the exhaustive exploration, over time, of one admittedly very wide and multi-faceted theme — feminism. Her images in this exhibition are from the past decade. In her series titles, such as *Reproduction*, *Manual Labour* and *Vacuum*, she employs witty wordplay to underscore the content and intent of the works. Almost all her photographs include the female face and/or figure and when this is not the case, as in her 1988 series *Still Life*, her subject matter is, by association, palpably feminine or female, as, for example, the delicate tea-cup or the aestheticized washing basket.

As Marion Marrison has observed, most female artists have a feminist perspective and most are likely to be 'read' as feminist.<sup>16</sup> Janina Green is an artist whose work is unmistakably and intentionally feminist. With photography often cited as a particularly female-dominated artform, it is especially interesting to take the opportunity that a survey affords to engage with such uncompromisingly consistent examples of feminist practice.

The eight or nine series of images represented in this survey are informed by Green's extensive research into feminist theory and touch on many of the key issues in women's studies. Thus the first series, *Anxiety*,<sup>17</sup> (1986) examines psychoanalysis, art history, originality and women artists. It features Cibachrome head studies based on close-ups of tormented faces rephotographed from drawings by Kathe Kollwitz.

*Reproduction* exposes the representation of women in (women's) magazine culture, tellingly juxtaposing text, as Marrison does, over colour images of sex-objectified torsos, glamorous models and a Narcissus whose reflection assumes a life of its own and offers herself to the spectator's gaze. It is significant that most of these seductive, eroticised images that Green has rephotographed were specifically produced as illustrations and advertisements for an (almost) all-female audience — though presumably by male photographers. For despite the target-viewers of the originals, their agenda and their rhetoric are not unequivocally feminine.

Green often chooses a section or small fragment of the original and in reproducing and enlarging it, isolates it from the commercial product it connotes and thereby alters its reading. Her interventions reveal the deliberate way these images are formulated and viewed. Her versions facilitate the female gaze on the female subject and reclaim the idea of feminine beauty for the female viewer. Yet even the confronting stares of 'Blondes' (1986) hint at some unseen, lurking threat that targets women and that seems to pervade the whole series. There are similarities here, again, with the work of Marion Marrison. *Reproduction* echoes Marrison's *Practical Dreams* both in the overall subject matter — aspects of consumerism and commercialisation — and in the unsettling ambience it suggests.

*Still Life* (1988) is an ode to Australian women artists, too often overlooked, and explores traditional female genres and the notion of domesticity. Against neutral backgrounds, Green places familiar domestic subject matter: a brimming laundry basket, a genteelly arranged tea-tray and a vase of flowers. If hand-colouring was an over-used Postmodern technique, in this work it has a particular relevance. Silver gelatin prints are tinted with photographic dyes and make reference to the 'women's work' of hand-colouring in early commercial photography and also suggests the nineteenth-century 'ladies' pastime' of collecting and hand-colouring photographs and decorating the album pages — these activities denied, of course, the status of serious art-making.

*Still Life* is also intended as a homage to early local women artists such as Nora Heysen who painted in this genre — flower studies and domestic interiors. (One of Janina Green's aims is to raise awareness of the role and significance of women artists.) The series parodies the earnest symbolism of traditional still-life painting, especially the *vanitas* or *memento mori* and by printing them large-scale and in close-up, Green aims to invest these small, simple, homely subjects with a dignity and significance usually reserved for loftier icons. Her use of attention-getting, not-quite-natural colour is also part of this strategy.

**group exhibitions**

- 1987 *Urban Structures*, Artists' Space, Melbourne
- 1988 *Australian Photography 1978-1988*, Australian National Gallery Drill Hall, University of Canberra  
*The Thousand Mile Stare*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne  
*New Acquisitions-Photography*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1989 *Still Life Show*, Artists Space, Melbourne  
*Up Front*, Victorian Centre for Photography Show, Blaxland Gallery, Melbourne



Three bathers — Collingwood Pool, 17th June 1989/  
1989, 25" x 30" from the series *Figureworks*

- 1990 *Kodak Five Visions*, Artists Space, Melbourne  
*Australian Photography - The City of Waverley Collection*, The Exhibitions Gallery, Waverley  
*Best Billboard in Town, Special Effects Projections*, Myer, Chadstone  
*Fragmentation and Fabrication: Recent Australian Photography*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide



*On the Edge: Australian Photographers of the Seventies*, San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego

*Women and Animals: Oppression, Representation and Resistance*, Society of Photographic Education, Atlanta, Georgia



'Acorn Fairy Landscape', 1979 9.5" x 11.75" approx  
from the series *Practical Dreams*

#### collections

Art Gallery of New South Wales  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris  
Burnie Art Gallery  
High Court of Australia  
National Gallery of Australia  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Philip Morris Collection  
Swinburne Institute  
Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery  
University of Tasmania  
Visual Arts Board Art Purchase Program

If, as has been suggested, a woman's gaze at an erotic female image involves a 'masculinisation' of that gaze, *Figure Works* (1989) reconstructs the female body for female spectatorship, much as *Reproduction* did for the female face. The series addresses female desire and the delicate subject of childhood sexuality, presenting unidentified (headless) nude studies of pre-pubescent girls in poses that range from the sexually neutral ('Nike') to the provocative ('Hermes'). That the photographer is female is crucial to the analysis of this work. Her studies of naked 'Bathers' in and around a wading-pool hinge on the feminist tenet that the female body should not be viewed as a sex object. These exquisite images therefore feature the less-than-perfect bodies of some of the kinds of women who are rarely seen in nude or portrait photography: the ordinary, the working-class, the ethnic, the obese ... They celebrate the private moments of everyday women freed from the tyranny of the male gaze. On a technical note, it is Green's experiments with monochrome colour photography that account for the distinctive green cast of some of *Figure Works*. Janina Green's 1990s *Untitled* suite, with its evocations of childhood sexuality and paranoia, continues the concerns explored in *Figure Works*.

In the *Mannequin* series (1990-91) Green mines some of the material that Marion Marrison addresses in *Practical Dreams* and employs techniques and media as varied as the Vandyke print, collage, mahogany laminate and acrylic drawings. Once again Green blurs the line between photography and painting. The technical experimentation of the works flags Green's imminent move towards the burgeoning 'new technologies' — digital and computer-generated image-making. The series has the same unsettling, edgily humorous quality as *Practical Dreams*.

*Manual Labour* (1991) depicts another feminist preoccupation, taking an elegaic look at traditional female work and *Vacuum* (1993) similarly investigates domesticity and dirt, cleanliness and sexuality. These are complex works, employing a range of technical interventions: hand-tinting of silver gelatin prints, laminating onto canvas; some ('photo-paintings') are painted in oils, some incorporate plastic lettering. As a series, *Vacuum* is given a formal cohesiveness in that most images highlight a female subject, in a series of disturbingly submissive poses, against backdrops of busy domestic interiors of oppressive and surreal complexity.

*Manual Labour* unmasks the failed promise of labour-saving devices to liberate women from household tasks, an irony noted by many commentators including Luce Irigaray.<sup>18</sup> A silhouetted 'housewife', her identity obscured, reverently clutches an iron, a telephone, a vacuum cleaner ... the images are like religious pictures, but the 'miracle' of freedom from housework has not evenuated. There are ever-higher standards to maintain — and in her 'free' time, the homemaker is expected to undertake paid work outside the home. The simple composition, muted monochrome and small format of these works belie their sinister and serious subtext. *Manual Labour* focuses on what Julia Kristeva calls the system of 'ritual activity, rites of defilement and purification which prescribe limits between man and woman, woman and mother',<sup>19</sup> where 'the concept of "dirty" is inextricably linked with family life.'<sup>20</sup>

Green's recent works continue to investigate feminist issues and to experiment with departures from 'straight' photography. *Understudy: Portrait de l'artiste* is a suite of digital prints on Canson paper, images based on albumen prints collected by the late American art historian E. Maurice Bloch. This collection of sixty-eight photographs of artists in their studios was originally taken in the 1880s. Green insinuates a feminist reading by superimposing a female figure onto each of the original prints.

Green's most recent images co-incidentally echo the subject matter of Hardman's earliest main body of work. These works-in-progress are large, black and white landscapes soaked with photographic dyes. Highly sexualized vistas, they refer to psychological space rather than the landscape tradition. There is an ever-present sense of menace and nemesis, made even more potent by the digital addition to several prints of a 1950s satellite. Though, as Green remarks, 'they are spooky enough without the foreign body!'<sup>21</sup>

1991 *Women's Images of Women*, Westpac Gallery 11, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne

*Stranger than Fiction*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra

*AGFA National Photographic Exhibition*, Albury Regional Art Centre, Albury

*Artists' Portraits of Artists*, Victorian Centre for Photography, Melbourne



'Paul René Schutzenberger in his studio, 1888'  
1994 8" x 12" from the series *Understudy*

1992 *Interiors*, Victorian Centre for Photography, Melbourne

1993 *Summer Salon*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne

1994 *Full Spectrum: Colour and Photography 1880-1990s*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

1995 *Technothelylogia*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne



#### publications by the artist

- 1975 *Green Bans*, M. Hardman & P. Manning, Australian Conservation Foundation, Melbourne
- 1981 *Practical Dreams*, Marion Hardman, Lamella Press, Sydney

#### works

All works by Marion Marrison in this exhibition are taken from the following series:

- Green Bans*, 1974 - 75;  
*Bonnet Hill Bush Series*, 1974 - 85;  
*Practical Dreams*, 1979 - 80;  
*Dumb Animals*, 1990 - 92;  
*Dozing Duennas*, 1993 - 94;  
*Work in Progress* 1995 - 96.

The work of both Marion Marrison and Janina Green has received considerable critical acclaim. Geoffrey Batchen spoke of the 'lingering fascination' <sup>22</sup> of Marrison's images, Max Dupain described Marrison as 'a very distinguished photographer' <sup>23</sup> and Helen Ennis has referred to her as 'a seminal Tasmanian photographer, very sensitive, very important.' <sup>24</sup> Marrison's Tasmanian connection adds yet another layer of interest and meaning to her work as it is exhibited here for the first time in some years, particularly after a period of non-production. Janina Green, says Beatrice Faust, '... sensitively and critically respond[s] to the ideas of the times.' <sup>25</sup> *Herald* critic Campbell Thomson described her prints as 'shimmering in the space between representation and metaphor ... a mystery to play with and enjoy'. <sup>26</sup> Her still life work has been favourably compared to that of Robert Mapplethorpe. <sup>27</sup>

One hundred and fifty years ago, the invention of photography was widely believed to be heralding 'the death of painting'. Similarly, the advent of the word-processor was supposed to signal the end of the printed book form in the contemporary era. All indications, in both instances, are to the contrary. And despite the predictions and the best efforts of some, 'straight' darkroom photography survives as well. As Roland Barthes noted, the plausibility of photography, as we know it, is based not on its 'truth to appearance' but on its being a record of 'something's irrefutable place in space and time'. <sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Batchen takes up this point in addressing the possibility of traditional, still-camera photography being replaced by computerised image-making. He notes that, whereas photography can claim considerable objectivity, 'digital imaging is an overtly fictional process ... it is nothing but fabrication, abandoning even the rhetoric of truth associated with photography'. <sup>29</sup>

There will always be a role, Batchen affirms, for a medium whose referent is something existent in the real world, what Susan Sontag called 'something directly stencilled off the real' <sup>30</sup> and Rosalind Krauss described as 'a kind of deposit of the real itself.' <sup>31</sup> Although digital images are indices of a sort, 'their referents are differential circuits and abstract data banks of information'... [They are] not 'signs of reality, . [but] signs of signs'. <sup>32</sup> Photography, says Batchen, is a manifestation of 'the desire to orchestrate the relationship between concepts such as nature, knowledge, representation, time and space; between observing subject and observed object'. <sup>33</sup> Batchen concludes that while these concepts and these relationships endure, so will a photographic culture. Photography, he says, will cease to be a dominant element of modern life only when 'the desire to photograph (and the peculiar arrangement of knowledge and investments which that desire represents) is re-figured as another social and cultural formation'. <sup>34</sup> that is, the inscription of another way of seeing and being.

In this light, there is room for optimism about the future of photography. In the hands of skilled and discriminating artist-practitioners such as Janina Green and Marion Marrison, digital and computer-generated imagery would seem to be a tool to enhance or counterpoint, rather than entirely replace, conventional photographic practice.

We cannot be sure exactly 'Whither photography?', which in itself is surely cause for excitement and speculation, rather than alarm. But the work in *Changes* offers some clues, perhaps, and suggests some of the intriguing future directions this compelling and versatile medium may take.

Diana Klaosen

January 1996

#### collections

- Albury Regional Gallery  
Art Gallery of South Australia  
City of Waverley  
City of Sunshine  
Griffith University  
Horsham City Art Gallery  
National Gallery of Australia  
National Gallery of Victoria  
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology  
State Library of Victoria

#### works

All works by Janina Green in this exhibition are taken from the following series:

- Reproduction*, 1986;  
*Still Life*, 1987 - 88;  
*Figureworks*, 1989;  
*Mannequins*, 1990 - 91;  
*Manual Labour*, 1991;  
*Vacuum*, 1993;  
*Understudy*, 1994;  
*Plantation*, 1995 - 96.

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## cover photographs

Marion Marrison  
'Mrs Levis', 1993-94, 16" x 20" from the series *Dozing Duennas*

Janina Green  
'Iron', 1991, 16" x 12" from the series *Manual Labour*

Marion Marrison  
'Bonnet Hill Bush Series No. 106', 1983-1985  
Diptych 20" x 30" approx

## Footnotes

- 1 Marion Marrison (Hardman) quoted in Exhibition Catalogue Essay by Jonathan Holmes, *New Directions — New Art*, University of Tasmania, 1982
- 2 Marion Marrison, Catalogue Essay, *Read & Wrapped, Viewed & Banned*, Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, 1995
- 3 *ibid*
- 4 *ibid*
- 5 Gary Catalan, *Artlink*, Vol. 2, No. 2, May-June, 1982
- 6 Jonathan Holmes, *New Directions — New Art*, *op. cit.*
- 7 *ibid*
- 8 *ibid*
- 9 Marion Marrison, *Read & Wrapped, Viewed & Banned*, *op. cit.*
- 10 Marion Marrison, in correspondence with the author, 1/12/95
- 11 Brett Butfield, review of *Read & Wrapped, Viewed & Banned*, *DB magazine*, Adelaide, Nov. 22 — Dec 5, 1995
- 12 Catriona Moore, review of *Dozing Duennas*, *Eyeline* 27, Autumn — Winter 1995
- 13 Marion Marrison, in correspondence with the author, 1/12/95
- 14 *ibid*
- 15 Marion Marrison, in correspondence with the author, 05/11/1995
- 16 Marion Marrison, in conversation with the author, Sydney, 15/7/ 1992
- 17 Works from the *Anxiety* series are not featured in this exhibition.
- 18 Luce Irigaray, quoted in *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford, Blackwell Press, Norwich, 1994, p. 79
- 19 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1982, p. 127
- 20 Phyllis Palmer, *Domesticity and Dirt: Housewives and Domestic Servants in the United States 1920 - 1945*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1989, p. 139
- 21 Janina Green, in correspondence with the author, December, 1995
- 22 Geoffrey Batchen, Catalogue Essay, *Dozing Duennas*, Stills Gallery, Sydney, 1994
- 23 Max Dupain, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10/02/1981
- 24 Helen Ennis, in discussion with the author, 13/07/1992
- 25 Beatrice Faust, *The Age*, 13/9/1989
- 26 Campbell Thomson, *The Herald Thursday Magazine*, 23/07/1989
- 27 By commentators including Beatrice Faust, John Carruthers and Angela Borg.
- 28 Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Hill and Wang, New York, 1981, p. 77
- 29 Geoffrey Batchen, Unpublished Lecture, Tasmanian School of Art at Hobart, 19/08/1994
- 30 Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1977, p. 164
- 31 Rosalind Krauss, 'Photography in the Service of Surrealism', in *L'Amour Fon: Photography and Surrealism*, Rosalind Krauss and Jane Livingston, Abbeville Press Publishers, New York, 1985, p. 31
- 32 Geoffrey Batchen, *op. cit.*
- 33 *ibid*
- 34 *ibid*



Curator: Diana Klaosen

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## CHANGES

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